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FBI Bugging Data Sent to White House

Associated Press

Washington

Acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III said yesterday his agency sent to the White House the information obtained in its investigation of the bugging of Democratic national headquarters during the presidential election campaign.

Gray said the investigative report and interviews conducted by the FBI into the Watergate headquarters bugging were sent to the White House after the data were requested by John Dean, presidential counsel, last July 19.

The 56-year-old Gray also told the Senate Judiciary Committee that one month earlier he had killed a letter addressed to H. R. Haldeman, White House chief of staff, containing information about the Watergate investigation.

He did not say who on his staff prepared the letter, which came to him two days after the June 17 bugging was discovered.

The FBI's activities in the Watergate case arose during the first day of Gray's ap-

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pearance before the Judiciary Committee, which is examining his credentials to be the permanent director of the FBI.

ASSURANCES

Gray, who has been acting director for the past ten months, was nominated by President Nixon for the permanent post on February 16.

Gray gave assurances to the committee that, if his appointment is confirmed, the agency will remain nonpolitical as he said it had been during the 48-year tenure of his predecessor, the late J. Edgar Hoover. He also denied he made political speeches for Mr. Nixon during last fall's election campaign.

Despite his statements, Senator Robert C. Byrd (Dem.-W. Va.), a Democratic leader and committee member, again said he would not vote for Gray because he still believes the acting director is too political for the job.

"The politicalization of the FBI is tantamount to setting up an American gestapo," said Byrd.

BUGGING

Gray said he first learned of the Watergate bugging at midday June 17 while on the West Coast for a speaking engagement.

"I was first told it was a robbery, then a bombing, and then that a listening device was found," he said. "I told him (W. Mark Felt, then number 2 man in the FBI) to go, and to to the hilt, and spare no horses in the investigation."

He said that later in the day he learned that James W. McCord, a former FBI agent and security coordinator for the Republican National Committee, was involved in the Watergate break-in and bugging.

He said he gave the Watergate investigation the highest priority, with no restrictions or limitations.

At the beginning of the investigation, Gray said, "We started out close because we didn't know who would be involved. We only let those people know who needed to know."

LETTER

Soon thereafter, he said, as a matter of routine, a summary of the investigation report and a letter of transmittal, bearing the FBI letterhead, to Henry Peterson, assistant U.S. attorney general in charge of the criminal division, and to Haldeman arrived on his desk.

He said he refused to send the letter to Haldeman. "It was not sent. I know it was not sent."

On July 19, however, he said Dean requested that the FBI provide him with the information it had because he had been placed in charge of the White House investigation with respect to the Watergate incident by Mr. Nixon.

Gray said the FBI's legal counsel told him he could not transmit information to the White House on his own but must provide it upon the request of someone representing the President.

Gray also told the committee that he would be willing to allow any member of the Senate to inspect the Watergate file.